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July 27, 2017

Rear Admiral Michael F. McAllister
Commander – 17th Coast Guard District
United States Coast Guard
709 W. 9th Street
Juneau, AK 99801

Attn: Lt. Jonathan Dale

Subject: Cook Inlet RCAC Recertification, Docket Number: USCG-2017-0289

Admiral McAllister,

The Cook Inlet Aquaculture Association (CIAA) would like to express its support for the recertification of the Cook Inlet Regional Citizens Advisory Council (RCAC).

CIAA maximizes the value of Cook Inlet's common property salmon resource using science, education, and technology. We are keenly aware of the importance of preventing oil spills and other types of pollution from fouling the waters of Cook Inlet. Unfortunately, we have experienced the devastating impacts an oil spill can have on the fishing industry. In 1987, the tanker Glacier Bay went aground near the mouth of the Kenai River spilling 130,000 gallons of oil at the start of the commercial fishing season forcing the closure of fishing for several periods.

Cook Inlet RCAC, by advocating for improved spill response and protection of important habitats, provides a necessary link between the citizens of Cook Inlet, CIAA, and the oil industry. We recognize the value of the coastal habitat mapping and imaging database for shoreline protection, the comprehensive navigational risk assessment for the Cook Inlet region, and the dedicated docking assist and rescue tug for Cook Inlet. These and other accomplishments are the result of the Cook Inlet RCAC's efforts.

CIAA has worked closely with Cook Inlet RCAC since 1990 to make improvements in oil spill prevention and response. Through frequent and regular meeting and public outreach efforts, Cook Inlet RCAC helps keep our constituents current with the issues affecting our resources. Cook Inlet RCAC's regular newsletter and personal appearances have kept the channels of communication open between citizens, government agencies, and industry.

With the increased oil and gas activity in Cook Inlet, citizen oversight of the industry is as important as ever. We have enjoyed working with Cook Inlet RCAC and look forward to our continued partnership in the future.

Salmon enhancement today means better salmon fishing tomorrow.

We strongly urge the U.S. Coast Guard to recertify Cook Inlet RCAC so that it can continue to build on its work and positively impact the future of Cook Inlet.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Gary Fandrei". The ink is dark and the signature is fluid and legible.

Gary Fandrei
Executive Director